REMARKS

A. <u>Status of the Application</u>

- Claims 1-7, 9-11, 20 and 31-49 are pending, of which claims 1 and 35 are independent claims.
- Claims **8**, **12-19** and **21-30** were previously cancelled.

B. Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment

On page 2 of the Notice, the Examiner requested correction of the claims. Specifically, claims 12-30 were incorrectly listed as "Cancelled," when, in fact, claims 12-19 were cancelled. Correction to the claims has been made.

C. <u>Authorization for Email Communication</u>

Recognizing that Internet communications are not secure, Applicants hereby authorize the USPTO to communicate with any authorized representative concerning any subject matter of this application by electronic mail. Applicants understand that a copy of these communications will be made of record in the application file.

D. Conclusion

In general, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any

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claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

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Respectfully submitted,

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